

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

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| Course | THE SPIRITUALITY OF DALLAS WILLARD SPIR 0670 1S |
| Date, Time, and Delivery Format | MAY 8 – JUNE 19, 2023 MONDAYS & THURSDAYS, 6:30 PM – 9:20 PM SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE |
| Instructor | MATTHEW GREEN, PhD Email: mgreen@tyndale.ca |
| Class Information | The classes will be livestreamed on Mondays and Thursdays from 6:30 PM – 9:20 PM. Office Hours: by appointment. |
| Course Material | Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only. |

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of Dallas Willard’s understanding of the Christian spiritual life and how he saw God’s desire for people to live in the Kingdom. It begins by examining Willard’s view of the problems of the contemporary age and all eras, moves into foundations for spiritual transformation, depicts the means by which growth and change can occur, and finishes with a vision of what maturity and the earthly fulfillment of the Kingdom looks like. The course will integrate material from his major spiritual works as appropriate.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Identify Willard’s overarching perspective on the Christian spiritual life and recognize the need and responsibility to participate in it.

2. Articulate Jesus' vision for people and the spiritual resources available to enable people to follow the life and manner of Jesus as Willard sees them and provide an underlying theology that grounds engagement with spiritual disciplines.
3. Discuss some potential weaknesses or gaps in Willard's philosophy of the spiritual life to synthesize a more complete and apropos theology and theopraxis.
4. Recognize how Willard's perspectives are applicable to one's personal and church life and engage with God about one's responsibility (or freedom from responsibility) to work toward transformation in those spheres.
5. Create a practical tool for teaching and/or engaging with Willard's spirituality.
6. Integrate aspects of Willard's approach to the spiritual life into one's own practices, both individually and corporately, engaging in one's spirituality strategically and developing a habit of training in timely disciplines.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Required reading will include selections from the following. Chapters assigned are listed in section IV: Course Schedule, Content and Required Readings. While students are welcome and encouraged to read the entirety of the texts, it is not required for this course.

Primary Texts:

- Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2009. **DC**
- . [*The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship*](#). San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2009. **GO**
- . [*Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*](#). Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2012. **RH**
- . *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2009. **SD**
- . "[Where is Moral Knowledge?](#)" in *Provocations*. Feb 2007.

Secondary Texts:

- Wilder, Jim. *Renovated: God, Dallas Willard & the Church That Transforms*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2020. **RW**

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Willard, Dallas. *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012. **HG**

———. *Living in Christ's Presence: Final Words on Heaven and the Kingdom of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014. **LCP**

———. *Life Without Lack: Living in the Fullness of Psalm 23*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2018. **LWL**

Willard, Dallas, Steven L. Porter, Aaron Preston, and Gregg A. Ten Elshof. *The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge*. Taylor & Francis, 2018. **DMK**

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR HYBRID COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
 - Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
 - Well-lit and quiet room
 - Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
 - Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
 - A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*
- *exceptions with permission from professor

D. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

E. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Attendance and Class Participation: 10% of final grade

Students are expected to attend class sessions according to Attendance Policy published in the Academic Calendar. Everyone should come to class prepared to dialogue with the instructor and one another about what they have read and what is being talked about during class periods. In addition, students should be open to dialoguing about the meditations/prayers assigned during the previous class (see #3 below) and to share their general experience, particularly unexpected struggles, surprises, or moments of happiness

that arise. Nobody needs to share overly personal details, but everyone should be willing to talk about their experience at some point during the course.

This assignment is related to Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3.

2. Response to Readings: 25% of final grade

Students need to read the assigned chapters/readings prior to the class specified in the schedule. Allowances will be made for the first few sessions if books have not arrived.

Each student should post thoughtful responses to at least 2 of the following questions:

- What resonated with you in the readings or what did you particularly appreciate?
- What questions did you have about the readings or what questions did they bring up for you?
- What did you disagree with or find problematic or lacking from the readings?
- How do these readings build on previous sessions' readings to develop a coherent spiritual theology?

Students are free to answer these questions based on the assigned or recommended readings for the class.

This assignment is related to Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3.

3. Meditations / Prayers: 30% of final grade

At the end of some class sessions, meditations or exercises will be assigned. The student is expected to set aside a given space of time to consider and pray over questions that are intended to connect the material to the student's personal life or engage with a practice designed to be connected to the material. Afterward, the student will write up a one to two-page reflection on the experience. The student is not expected to divulge intimate or highly personal details in the reflection, but is required to provide a sufficient explanation of the prayer experience and how it connected to the material to demonstrate their completion of the time and thoughtfulness of the topic.

This assignment is related to Learning Outcome 4 & 6.

4. Final Project: 35% of final grade

The student will craft a final course project that both

1. Demonstrates understanding of the topics covered in the readings and class sessions
2. Could be used in the students' ministerial or community context to benefit others and contribute to their spiritual growth and/or well-being by teaching or helping others to reflect upon the ideas.

The student should inform the instructor of their general plan for approval before beginning the project.

Some potential projects:

- A sermon series of at least 3 messages and 1 hour's time total
- A series of at least 24 devotional meditations

- A small group curriculum covering at least 6 weeks of material
- A plan for a series of day or weekend personal retreats including specific reflections to pray through
 - Be sure that the plans and reflections have sufficient content to demonstrate understanding of Willard’s thought. This may require some care.
- Plans for a day retreat (12hr or longer; could be spent as two 6-hour days if needed) where the student actively engages with some aspects of Willard’s spiritual philosophy, followed by journals or reflections written during/afterward discussing what happened during that experience.
- A portion of a curriculum for children or teens to engage with what the student has learned. Curriculum should cover at least 6 lessons with lesson plans and relevant activities.
- A formal 12-page paper analyzing or presenting an argument regarding a particular aspect of Willard’s spiritual philosophy PLUS reflections from an additional meditation of at least 45 minutes of the student’s creation related to the paper topic.
- Another kind of project not presented here to be discussed with the instructor beforehand. (You’re welcome to surprise me with something I hadn’t thought of.)

This assignment is related to Learning Outcomes 3, 5.

F. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

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|--------------------------|-------|
| Attendance/Participation | 10 % |
| Response to Readings | 25 % |
| Meditations | 30 % |
| Final Project | 35 % |
| Total Grade | 100 % |

H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, “Documenting Chicago Style”](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the *Chicago Manual of Style* or reference the [tip sheet, “How to Cite Sources in Theology”](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean’s Office (aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

I. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Pre-reading is expected prior to start of class. Late registrants are responsible for the consequences of partial preparation.

Course sessions will begin, if appropriate, with reflections on the previous week's meditations. Students are encouraged to share their experiences with the class, though no one is required to share details with which they are uncomfortable. Afterward, the instructor will highlight some material and provide context and detail to the readings, potentially inviting commentary and opinions from the students. Some sessions may involve exercises during the class period. The remaining time is reserved for discussion, based at least in part on the questions and issues raised by the students during the reading.

As noted above, readings noted in the schedule below are to be finished prior to the session. Students are expected to arrive ready to discuss them and have submitted responses to the questions regarding them.

Course Schedule:

1. An Introduction to Dallas
2. What is Wrong
 1. DC 1, RH 3
 2. Recommended: LWL 4
3. The Failure of the Contemporary Church
 1. SD 3, DC 2
 2. Recommended: GO 9
4. The Need and Nature of Discipleship
 1. SD Appendix 2 or GO 1, DC 8, GO 2
 2. Recommended: LCP 1
5. The Goodness of Things
 1. DC 3-4
 2. Recommended: LWL 1-3; GO 3, 15
6. A Model for Growth
 1. RH 5, GO 12
 2. Recommended: GO 4, LCP 3
7. Transforming the Heart
 1. DC 5-6, RH 1
 2. Recommended: SD 11, RH 4, LWL 6
8. Training the Body
 1. SD 1, 6

2. Recommended: SD 7-8, GO 8
9. Details on Disciplines
 1. SD 9, GO 14
 2. Recommended: GO 5, SD 7
10. Love and Relationship in Kingdom Life
 1. DC 7, RH 10, SD 5
 2. Recommended: LWL 7, HG 2-3
11. A Step Forward and a Step Back
 1. RH 2, Articles provided
 2. Recommended: RH 5-11, DMK all
12. Beyond Willard and Specific Topics
 1. RW 1, 7; HG 9

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)

Black, Gary Jr. *The Theology of Dallas Willard: Discovering Protoevangelical Faith*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013.

Moon, Gary W. *Becoming Dallas Willard: The Formation of a Philosopher, Teacher, and Christ Follower*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018.

Robb, Michael Steward. *The Kingdom Among Us: the Gospel According to Dallas Willard*. Fortress Press, 2022.

Wilder, Jim. *Renovated: God, Dallas Willard & the Church That Transforms*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2020.

Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2009.

———. *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2009.

———. *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012.

———. *Knowing Christ Today: Why We Can Trust Spiritual Knowledge*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2009.

- . *Living in Christ's Presence: Final Words on Heaven and the Kingdom of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.
- . *Life Without Lack: Living in the Fullness of Psalm 23*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2018.
- . *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2012.
- . *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2009.
- . "Where is Moral Knowledge?" in *Provocations*. Feb 2007.
[<https://dwillard.org/articles/where-is-moral-knowledge>]
- Willard, Dallas, Steven L. Porter, Aaron Preston, and Gregg A. Ten Elshof. *The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge*. Taylor & Francis, 2018.
- Willard, Dallas and Gary Black Jr. *The Divine Conspiracy Continued: Fulfilling God's Kingdom on Earth*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2014.
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